

*Itea virginica* L.



<b>Common Name</b>	Virginia Sweetspire
<b>Botanical Name</b>	<i>Itea virginica</i>
<b>Family</b>	Escalloniaceae
<b>Form</b>	Shrub
<b>Growth Habit</b>	Virginia Sweetspire, a shrub with an open, delicate form and arching branches, usually grows from 3'-8' tall. It is deciduous, but the leaves may persist on the bush through the winter, especially in the southern portion of its range.
<b>Bark</b>	The bark is thin and brownish-gray in color.
<b>Leaves</b>	The alternate leaves are elliptically shaped and 3"-4" long and 1"-1 ½" wide. They have finely toothed edges and are slightly hairy beneath. Fall color is orange to red or purple.
<b>Flowers</b>	The tiny, white flowers appear from spring through early summer on 3"-6" long, cylindrically-shaped clusters at branch ends. The individual flowers are each ¼"-½" long and have 5 linear petals. The flowers are quite showy and slightly fragrant.

<b>Fruit</b>	The dry, egg-shaped capsules, each about ¼” long, are found in cylindrical clusters on the remains of the flower stalks. They persist on the shrub through fall and winter.
<b>Soil conditions</b>	This shrub prefers moist, wetland soils but can tolerate well-drained garden soils as well.
<b>Water</b>	Virginia Sweetspire needs supplemental watering until established.
<b>Light Requirement</b>	Full sun to partial shade
<b>Native Growth Zone</b>	8-10
<b>Propagation</b>	Seeds, cuttings, division
<b>Habitat</b>	Found in swamps, floodplain forests, wet hammocks, and along the edges of inland water bodies.
<b>Remarks</b>	This shrub will produce the most flowers if it receives at least a few hours of full sun per day. In the wild, it has an open form and is sometimes sparse, but in cultivation it will take on a denser, very striking, and attractive form. Formerly treated as a member of the family Saxifragaceae, a broadly heterogeneous family now broken up into distinct families, there is some debate as to which family this species should be considered a member of.

**Works Consulted**